

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T JAKARTA 0374

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, PDID, TH, ID
SUBJECT: GOI DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VIEW OF THAI SITUATION

REF: JAKARTA 0373

1. DURING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY'S JANUARY 9 DISCUSSIONS WITH TOP FOREIGN DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS (REFTEL), DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS SURYONO DARUSMAN EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THAILAND MIGHT AT SOME POINT SEE ITS INTERESTS BETTER SERVED BY A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS IN INDOCHINA THAN WITH COUNTRIES FURTHER AFIELD, SUCH AS INDONESIA. HE IMPLIED, BUT DID NOT QUITE SAY, THAT INDONESIA WAS CONCERNED THAILAND MIGHT EVENTUALLY STRIKE A DEAL WITH HANOI WHICH WOULD, FROM THE INDONESIAN STANDPOINT, ADVERSELY AFFECT THE SOUTHEAST ASIA POWER ARRANGEMENT. BOTH OAKLEY AND THE AMBASSADOR DISAGREED WITH THIS THESIS, CITING HISTORICAL FRICTIONS BETWEEN THE THAI AND THEIR NEIGHBORS IN INDOCHINA, THE IMPACT ON THAILAND OF HORROR STORIES FROM THOUSANDS OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES AND THE THAI VIEW THAT A UNIFIED VIETNAM IS THE MAJOR THREAT TO THAILAND'S INDEPENDENCE. THEY DID NOT SEE THAILAND REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH VIETNAM AT THE EXPENSE OF THE BALANCING EFFECT OF ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS ASEAN NEIGHBORS.

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2. DARUSMAN MADE NO SPECIFIC REPLY, BUT SAID THAT THAILAND NEEDED TO ACT MUCH MORE QUICKLY AND MORE DECISIVELY TO MEET THE PROBLEM CAUSED BY DISAFFECTION OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY IN THE SOUTH. THIS SITUATION, HE SAID, RESEMBLES THAT IN THE PHILIPPINES TEN YEARS AGO. QADHAFI IS MEDDLING IN IT AND INDONESIA REGARDS THE SITUATION AS SERIOUS.

3. ASKED ABOUT JANUARY 9 INDONESIA PRESS REPORTS THAT KRIANGSAK PLANNED TO VISIT THE OTHER ASEAN CAPITALS BEFORE THE END OF JANUARY, DARUSMAN SAID THE LAST READING AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT WAS THAT KRIANGSAK WOULD NOT TRAVEL ABROAD FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ABOUT A VISIT BEFORE THE END OF JANUARY. THE DEPARTMENT HAD, HOWEVER, QUERIED ITS EMBASSY IN BANGKOK TO SEE IF THE RTG HAD CHANGED ITS POSITION.

4. COMMENT: THE MOTIVE BEHIND DARUSMAN'S FISHING EXPEDITION IS NOT CLEAR, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT INDONESIA POLICYMAKERS REGARD THAILAND AS ASEAN'S WEAKEST LINK AND ARE AWARE OF ITS WELL KNOWN, BUT EXAGGERATED, TENDENCY TO BEND WITH THW IND. WE WOULD APPRECIATE FOR OUR OWN BACKGROUND INFORMATION ANY RECENT BANGKOK REPORTING ON PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND VIETNAM.
MASTERS

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